

AN
ORATION,
 DELIVERED NOVEMBER 3d, *A. L.* 5797₂
 BY THE REQUEST OF
FELLOWSHIP LODGE,
 IN BRIDGEWATER,
 AT THE
CONSECRATION OF THE LODGE
 AND
INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS;
 IN THE PRESENCE OF THE
GRAND LODGE
 OF
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
 IN THE
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
 AND THE
GRAND LODGE
 OF THE
STATE OF RHODE-ISLAND.

BY HECTOR ORR.



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1797.

At a meeting of FELLOWSHIP LODGE of FREE and
ACCEPTED MASONS, in Bridgewater, November 3d,
A. L. 5797.

VOTED,

That our Brothers *Simcon Dunbar, S. D. Daniel Howard,* and *Josiah Otis*, be a Committee to express the thanks of the Lodge to the Right Worshipful HECTOR ORR for his elegant and sublime Oration delivered this day, and request a copy of the same for the press.

True copy from the Records.

NAHUM MITCHELL, Sec'y.

Bridgewater, Nov. 3d. 5797.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE LODGE.

BRETHREN,

To gratify the wishes of the Lodge you represent has always been my ambition, and I cannot but acknowledge their civility in the present instance, and shall comply with their request.

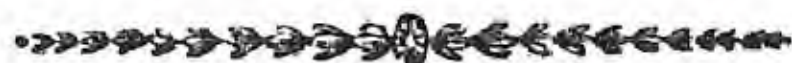
I am, with every sentiment of esteem,
your friend and brother,

HECTOR ORR.

Bridgewater, November 9th. 5797.



AN
ORATION.



WORSHIPFUL OFFICERS, *and*
BRETHREN OF THE CRAFT,

CONVENED this day in the solemn temple erected to the Supreme Architect of the universe, in conformity to antient custom of installation, let us here renew our vows, and enter into his courts with praise. As it is the place where HIS honor dwells, so let it be the place of our delight ; and by the sacred shrine of religion, let us erect the altar of Masonry, that Christianity may never be lost in the mason, and a mason never lost for the want of Christianity.

The history of Free Masonry forms a most interesting subject for discussion, as it displays the wisdom of the Creator, the force of genius, and the progress and decline of the arts and sciences. It bears no impressions of the horrors and calamities of war ; where lawful resistance is made the sport of arbitrary domination. Its pages are not stained with cruel and rancorous persecutions ; where the honest believer

believer must abjure his faith, or experience the tortures of the inquisition. It is not, like other antient histories, defaced with the rage and violence of party spirit,—with unnatural and inordinate passions,—with atheistic infidelity, nor the wanton smiles of libertinism. But it is the herald of universal peace and tranquillity ; and as it emanated from the best affections of the human heart, so, like an angel of love, it brings tidings of GOOD WILL TO MEN. Its object is the attainment of perfection, and to make man the *visible image* of the INVISIBLE ARCHITECT.

In treading the backward path through ages long elapsed, curiosity stands tiptoe at every step to descry those unexplored mysteries, which have baffled the researches of the most inquisitive mind. If it pauses but a moment to view the surrounding piles of ruin, it must lament the ravages of time, which has left but imperfect vestiges of the beautiful originals. The few indelible traces that have survived the general wreck are so many monuments of human ingenuity.

The garden of Paradise was undoubtedly favorable to the study of nature ; but necessity only, which was precluded so serene a clime, could turn the mind to important discoveries, and beneficial speculations. And the first specimen of invention, we find upon record, that
originated

originated there, was the sewing a few fig leaves together for an apron.

So antient is the foundation of this mysterious science, that it may be distinctly traced from the commencement of the world ; when light, order and proportion emerged from chaotic night, and the heterogeneous particles of matter that compose a universe. This claim to antiquity is undisputed; and collateral with its antiquity is the honorableness of the institution. The records of its infancy, when it was purely *operative*, have been censured for the admission of too much fiction and mystery ; but, as it quadrates with the manners of the age, it needs no apology. The fondness of the antients for allegory and metaphor gave to their writings the appearance of fable and romance ;—but their folly is the school of wisdom.

Before we can obtain admittance into this sacred retreat, over which presides WISDOM, TRUTH, and VIRTUE, we must be divested of every thing, that tends to give offence—by discarding from our bosoms every turbulent passion—banishing pride and rashness, fear and prejudice, hatred and slander, private piques and contentions—by resigning at the door our cares, and leaving behind us even the dust of our shoes ; that nothing more impure or corrupt than human nature might pass the threshold of the Lodge.—And the first *light* we be-

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hold is that, which descended from Heaven to guide men in the path of truth.

The government of a Lodge is as great a mystery, as masonry itself. The hope of reward, and the fear of punishment, which are the foundation of all obedience in civil society, have no influence here. The hammer of the master effects more than the most specious promises, or the commination of the most rigorous punishment. Neither seniority nor birth, literary merit nor the most dignified titles, either civil, military, or ecclesiastical, recommend a mason to an office among the craft. The officers are neither chosen by the Lodge, nor hired, taken by lot nor succession; but the whole business is so managed as to unite all in the grand design of being happy, and of communicating reciprocal happiness.

The moral character of Masonry is founded upon the irrefragable truths of geometry. The analogy is conspicuous to the attentive inquirer: and the ingenious and experienced craftsman, whose tools are so many mementos of his moral obligations and duties, develops the whole system of morality. Pride, which disdains the shackles of restraint, never allures him from the *level* of his fellow creatures, nor the fascinating charms of vice tempt him to deviate from the *plumb line* of rectitude and truth. In his intercourse with the world, he
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is to act upon the *square*, and to keep within *compass*. He protracts the *circle* of union, without diminishing his benevolence ; and, working by *rule*, he *smooths* the rugged path of life, and *paves* the *entrance* to the TEMPLE not made with hands.

It is not the design of the present performance to bestow extravagant encomiums upon the institution of masonry. The candid and the wise of every nation have been encouragers of the craft, through every grade in life, from the monarch on the throne to the honest and industrious peasant that turns the glebe. A *Warren* and a *Franklin*, who are still alive in the memories of their fellow-citizens, and once stood high in their esteem and confidence, presided over their respective Lodges. But the name of WASHINGTON, who sacrificed the sweets of *Vernon's* shade to the calls of his country, and braved the storm of war with a manly firmness that sat the world at defiance, gives more substantial importance to the Craft, than all that can be said or written in its praise.

The illiberal aspersions, which have been bestowed, in all ages, upon the institution, have proceeded from ignorance, and a bigotted system founded by prejudice and an over heated imagination. We publish to the world our CONSTITUTION, *history*, *charges*, *addresses*, *laws*, and *regulations*, which are so many illustrations of

of our profession. But such has been the force of superstition and scepticism that the number is few, who have resolutely dared to cultivate and practise our *principles*, compared to those who have had a curiosity to discover our *secrets*. Many would waste away fruitless hours to obtain clandestinely, what might be known in half that time, if they would read. Others shut their eyes for fear of conviction, and would rather suffer the imputation of being ignorant, than not censure. But we are shielded from the sneers of criticism by the honesty of our intentions, and the approbation of our own consciences. Those who have the friendly sympathy *secretly* to approve, we have the magnanimity *publicly* to commend. We dread not the scrutiny of the candid, nor are we ashamed to appeal to the good sense of the world for the goodness of the principles we profess. If we err, it proceeds more from a defect in the head, than from a vicious heart. We boast of no superiority in piety or knowledge to those who have not received masonic light, but we profess to know what they do not. This knowledge is a tree bringing forth much fruit, *and the day we eat thereof our eyes are opened ;—knowing good from evil.* The prohibition is dictated by prudence and discretion.—To the good and the great of all nations, languages and religion it is *free*, and they will always be *accepted*.

The good opinion of the world will be ever gratefully received ; but we shall not seek to obtain it by self debasement, or a voluntary sacrifice of our opinions. Being FREE, we shall never become the submissive minions of any haughty despot, or irresolutely abandon the indefeasible rights of our country.—As we do not infringe upon the salutary laws of society, by creating a separate interest, we pity that degraded piece of spite, which has the effrontery to condemn.—As we touch not the sacredness of any one's character, we neither injure nor designedly give offence.—And by making a bulwark of union, we retire to the Lodge, where we bury all national, political and ecclesiastical distinctions, and rising superior to private prepossessions and local prejudices, we blend our affections in the mutual endearments of BROTHERHOOD and CHARITY.

Our own country is to bear witness to our patriotism ; and our ready and cheerful acquiescence in the laws of the land will confound our adversaries, and convince the world of our detestation of war, conspiracies and rebellions. The traitor and the bold assassin will not be shielded from the hand of justice by seeking a refuge in the peaceful asylum for the virtuous and good.

Worshipful

Worshipful OFFICERS, and
BRETHREN of FELLOWSHIP LODGE,

Let us give the world such convincing proofs of the beneficial effects of our institution, by our economy,—our indefatigable assiduity to our several occupations in life,—the constancy, fidelity, the ardor and warmth of our friendships, and the affability of our deportment when without the walls of this favored retreat, as to silence the tongue of calumny. Cultivate extensive *philanthropy*, disinterested and comprehensive *benevolence* and universal *virtue*; those important branches of moral and social goodness, and the distinguishing ornaments of the Craft.

Having ability, without prejudice to yourselves or private concerns, to give food and raiment to the hungry and naked; forget not amid the diffusion of your gifts the distressed widow and hapless orphan of a deceased brother. Let their sighs always find audience; and when they have unbosomed their necessities, let them not sue in vain. Commiserate the unfortunate stranger, whose hard fate has abandoned him to despair.—Send speedy relief to the necessitous, remembering that though your benevolence is more immediately to be directed towards the fraternity, yet it is never to be abstracted on account of these engagements from the great family of mankind.—Wipe the tear
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of sorrow from the disconsolate eye, and bind up the wounds, and pour comfort into the heart of him, whom the hand of God has so bruised. These are among the good works, which your religion and your profession enjoin.

However lavish you may be of the favors of fortune, be sparing of the *honors* of Masonry. Degrade not the institution through avarice or a vain desire to enlarge the circle of your friendship ; for *merit* only, not numbers, can give respectability. By a resolute and undeviating perseverance in the practice of this belief, we shall be enabled to transmit it to our successors as an object worthy of their attention.

Finally, BRETHREN, *be ye all of one mind, live in peace, and may the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and to bless you.*

